Application No.: 09/846,249

Amendment Dated 07/27/2005

Customer No.: 24943

Reply to Office Action 04/27/2005

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1, 3-5, 9-13 were previously presented, claims 2 and 6 are original. Claims 7

and 8 have been cancelled. There is no amendment to the claims as presented.

1. (previously presented) An instant messaging (IM) system comprising: a plurality of

clients having IM client applications of the same or different types; an IM server

selectively connected to each of said clients via a computer network and providing a

prescribed range of functionality to said clients; each client type having a unique identifier

to enable access thereto via said computer network; and each client having a single

account on said IM server for all of its client types that can access said IM server; wherein

said account is identified by a unique identification number common to all of the client

types of that client; and wherein each said unique identifier of each client type of said

client is matched to said unique identification number of the particular client.

2. (original) An instant messaging system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said client types

include clients connected to the computer network via: (i) a PC-based instant messaging

client application program; (ii) a GSM device on a GSM network; (iii) an internet

browser-based client application; or (iv) an email-based client application.

3. (previously presented) An instant messaging system as claimed in claim 1, wherein

said prescribed range of functionality includes: (i) sending a message from one client to

another; (ii) receiving a message sent by one client to another; and (iii) identifying which

members of a group of clients that a client is a member or prospective member of are

currently connected to the computer network, or are probably so connected.

4. (previously presented) An instant messaging system as claimed in claim 1, wherein

said computer network is the internet or direct electronic links of computers and other

electronic devices.

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5. (previously presented) An instant messaging system as claimed in claim 1, wherein

said client types connected to the computer network via the GSM network have SMS

capability and are initially connected via an SMSC server to control and manage said

SMS therebetween, and wherein said SMSC server is directly connected to said IM server

via said computer network.

6. (original) A method for instant messaging between a plurality of clients having IM

applications of the same or different types, selectively interconnected to an IM server by

way of a computer network, whereby each client type has a unique identifier to enable

access thereto via the computer network, the method comprising the following steps:

providing a single account on the IM server for each client in respect of all of its client

types that can access the IM server; identifying the account by a unique identification

number that is common to all of the client types of that client; and matching each unique

identifier of each client type of that client to said unique identification number thereof.

7. (canceled)

8. (canceled)

9. (previously presented) An instant messaging system as claimed in claim 2, wherein

said client types includes a client connected to the computer network via a GSM device on

a GSM network, said unique identification number includes the GSM carrier code of the

carrier who provides telecommunication services to the GSM device.

10. (previously presented) An instant messaging system as claimed in claim 3, wherein

said prescribed range of functionality further includes replying to the sender client of a

received message by reference to the sender client's unique identification number.

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11. (previously presented) An IM server for use in an instant messaging system comprising a plurality of clients having IM client applications of the same or different types and where each client type has a unique identifier to enable access thereto via said computer network, said IM server selectively connected to each of said clients via a computer network and providing a prescribed range of functionality to said clients and wherein said IM server stores a single account for each client, said single account being in respect of all of the client's client types that can access said IM server and identifiable by a unique

identification number common to all of the client types of said client.

- 12. (previously presented) A message sent from one client of an instant messaging system to another, where said instant messaging system comprises a plurality of clients having IM client applications of the same or different types; an IM server selectively connected to each of said clients via a computer network and providing functionality for sending said message from one client to another; each client type having a unique identifier to enable access thereto via said computer network; and each client having a single account on said IM server for all of its client types that can access said IM server, wherein said account is identified by a unique identification number common to all of the client types of that client; and wherein each said unique identifier of each client type of a said client is matched to said unique identification number of the particular client.
- 13. (previously presented) A computer readable medium containing executable software for operating an instant messaging system as described in claim 1.